

Minutes of: RADCLIFFE TOWNSHIP FORUM

Date of Meeting: 18 November 2015

Present: Councillor Colin Jones (in the Chair)
Councillors Preston, Walker, S Briggs, T Isherwood, J Lewis,
N Parnell, R Shori and Skillen

Advisory Group Colette Jones, Friends of Close Park
Representatives Roy Vevers, Radcliffe Carnival Committee
David Lewis, Chapelfield Village Association

Public Attendance: 30 members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor D Bailey and Gill Stainthorpe

RTF480 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

RTF481 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was agreed:

That the Minutes of the last meeting of the Township Forum held on 16 September, 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Deputy Chair.

RTF482 LOCAL POLICE UPDATE

Inspector Mark Kenny attended the meeting in order to provide an update on key police issues in Radcliffe, as follows:-

- Key crime figures for Radcliffe:-
 - 26 - Burglary (dwelling)
 - 9 - Burglary (other)
 - 27 - Assault - injury (18 Domestic Violence)
 - 20 - Assault - no injury (7 Domestic Violence)
 - 37 - Vehicles
 - 48 - Arson
- Radcliffe North - warrant issued for an arrest relating to the discovery of a Cannabis Farm at Halsey Close - now with the CPS.
- Police Surgeries at the Library were now up and running. Police dealing with vehicle theft and anti-social behaviour around the Station Road area.
- Radcliffe East - Trading Standards were dealing with the prosecution cases relating to two shop owners the cases linked to drug warrants and fly tipping.
- Radcliffe West - Anti-social behaviour and drug dealing in a number of streets in the area. Police had undertaken a leaflet drop in relation to incidents. A warrant had been issued in relation to a problem family in Lever Street where drugs had been discovered.
- PACT meetings were being held prior to meetings of the Township Forum from 5 pm - 6 pm.

The Chair invited questions/comments and representations from members of the public present at the meeting.

- A gas cylinder, stolen from the garden of a property in the Hollinghurst Road area had been dumped on a local field. It had been recovered and returned to the supplier. This incident had been followed by the discovery of a lawn mower at the same site.
- Councillor Shori raised the issue of graffiti blighting the Stand Lane/Ringley Road area.

It was agreed:

That the police officers be thanks for their attendance and that the information provided be noted.

RTF483 RADCLIFFE CIVIC SUITE CLOSURE

Councillor Shori gave a presentation on the recent decision taken by the Council to close Radcliffe Civic Suite from April 2016 and on the proposals to redevelop the site.

Councillor Shori began by putting into context the reasons for the decision which related directly to the current financial situation of the Council, that the Authority had lost 60 % of the Government Grant and were having to priorities Council spending.

The decision to close the centre and the redevelopment proposals were linked with the need to improve the health of Radcliffe residents. Radcliffe had areas where, within a 2 mile radius of two GP Practices life expectancy levels were significantly different and the Council had a duty to tackle health inequalities in the area. Subsequently, the Council would be applying for funding to support proposals for a new £10 million leisure facility in Radcliffe which would include a conference/civic facility.

Councillor Shori acknowledged concerns relating to the loss of the Civic Suite as a heritage asset for Radcliffe, but stated the importance of looking towards the future and the positive and exciting opportunity to consolidate one building for future generations of Radcliffe.

Councillor Shori also raised concerns relating to the lack of trust some people may have with the Council. Councillor Shori highlighted the recent investment schemes that the Council had been able to deliver for Radcliffe such as the Bus Station and Market investment and the temporary swimming pool facility. There were also other welcomed investments such as the Dunelm Call Centre and proposals for a new supermarket. Radcliffe was now in the top 10 Greater Manchester wards for the construction and sale of new houses. The new leisure facility would help break the cycle of deprivation and inequality in Radcliffe and would encourage more private investment which would lead to more jobs opportunities as well as a healthier community.

The Chair invited questions/comments and representations from members of the public present at the meeting.

- A Green Party Member raised concerns relating to the lack of openness and transparency in relation to the Radcliffe Regeneration leaflet distributed by the Council which had made reference the redevelopment of the Civic Suite site when the Homes & Communities Agency bid could have related to "any land". Councillor Shori responded by confirming that the initial bid for funding from the Homes & Communities Agency had the Civic Suite address as the Grant would be linked to this site. The Green Street site could not accommodate a new leisure facility and new housing and the new housing could not go ahead without the subsidy from the Homes and Community Agency Grant.
- Concerns raised that a new leisure facility would improve the life expectancy of people in Radcliffe and that the residents within the 2 mile radius referred to earlier would have use of the same facilities. Councillor Shori reported on the clear link between increased exercise and increased life expectancy. Radcliffe also had high the levels of childhood obesity. Car ownership in some areas of Radcliffe were the lowest in the Borough. 140,000 people had used Radcliffe Pool prior to it's closure and the current temporary pool was proving a huge success in Radcliffe.
- Concerns relating to the proposals for new housing on this town centre site - would prefer to see more investment in bars and restaurant businesses on this site as there is currently nothing for local residents at night in the town centre. Councillor Shori agreed on the need to encourage private investment in the centre of town, however, this is not an option for the Council on this site as the new homes would only be built because they were being heavily subsidised. The Council have to prioritise their spending and cannot control everything. Any form of investment, including new housing should draw in further investment into the area.
- Concerns raised that if it is all social housing new residents may not have the spending power to use in Radcliffe town centre.
- Concerns relating to the lack of transparency in relation to the decision already made to close the Civic Suite and the lack of consultation with residents. Councillor Shori informed the meeting that there was no Statutory Duty on the Authority to consult on this decision. It was a democratic decision taken by democratically elected Councillors and the consultation on the proposals for the new leisure facility was now underway. Much had changed for the Council in terms of the loss of £60 million funding in Bury in the last 5 years and the Council needed to consolidate its Assets and make a Business Plan for 2016 and beyond.
- Councillor Lewis provided background information in relation to the the closure the Pool in Radcliffe 18 months ago. Councillor Lewis also confirmed that the Civic Suite building usage was the lowest in the Borough, at 18 % and that the Council did not have the funding to keep subsidising the facility and incur the losses.
- At first there were concerns over the loss of the Civic Suite, now the proposals seemed exciting and inspiring.
- What would happen to existing bookings for events currently held at the Civic Suite? The Council were currently looking at using other assets more productively and were being proactive in working with centre users on possible venues for future events whilst the proposals were being considered for the new leisure facility.
- Colette Jones commented that Radcliffe residents had been consulted at meetings of the Township Forum during the last 18 months on proposals for the temporary pool.

- Councillor Walker informed the meeting that thousands of leaflets had been delivered to Radcliffe residents inviting residents to complete a consultation form as part of the consultation process for the new leisure proposals.
- Concerns relating to the levels of childhood obesity and the need to encourage children to take more exercise. The new facilities would help to tackle this issue in Radcliffe.
- People do not like change but they need to embrace it to look towards a more positive future and the regeneration would be part of this.

Councillor Shori and the Chair, Colin Jones thanked the audience for their contributions to the debate. Members of the public were invited to view the exhibition on the proposals for the new development of the Green Street site and to take part in the Consultation by completing the questionnaires. There was also the opportunity to take part in a discussion with a representative from Great Places after the meeting and a Questions and Answers section was available for residents on the Council's website.

It was agreed:

That Councillor Shori be thanked for his presentation and thanks to all those who had contributed to the debate.

RTF484 OPEN FORUM

The Chair invited questions/comments and representations from members of the public present at the meeting. The Township Co-ordinator undertook to obtain a reply to matters that could not be dealt with directly at the meeting:-

- Councillor Parnell paid tribute to Bernard Slingsby who had recently passed away. Councillor Parnell commented on Bernard's work in securing the name of forgotten war hero on the Cenotaph. The Chair, Colin Jones requested that the Township Forum mark Bernard's passing and passed on his condolences to Bernard's family and friends on behalf of Members of the Township Forum.
- Radcliffe Christmas Lights Switch-On - 28 November from 1 pm - 5 pm, to include the Market Piazza and fun fair. A suggestion was made to ask Radcliffe Times to request nominations from the public for a local resident to switch-on the lights. The organisers suggested having Carol singers and a representative from Churches Together offered to make some enquiries.
- Councillor Walker informed the meeting of the mobile police station being set up in Radcliffe on Saturday 21 November in the evening. Councillor Walker would be joining Officers on the beat.
- 'I Will if You Will' - Feelgood Friday event at the pool for 16-19 year old girls, to include a number of activities and for each person who takes part in 4 activities they would be entered for a chance to win £100 New Look voucher as part of a prize draw at the event. Young people who wished to take part would have to book a place to take part.

RTF485 RADCLIFFE TOWNSHIP FORUM PLAN

Christine Maksymowski, Township Co-ordinator presented the draft report which included the issues raised by those who had taken part in the general round table

discussions on each of the key priorities contained within the Township Action Plan for 2014/15, for approval by members of the Township Forum.

It was agreed:

1. That the report be approved.
2. That further ideas/comments on the Plan be forwarded to Christine Maksymowski, Township Co-ordinator.

RTF486 ADVISORY GROUP UPDATE

Colette Jones, Friends of Close Park provided the following update:-

- The Radcliffe Tower project was coming to an end. The 'Friends of..' group were aiming to launch the Heritage Walks in April and were working with 'I Will if You Will' on a number of events.
- The Radcliffe Heritage website was now 'live'. Members were working on developing a new group to be named Radcliffe Manor Group to promote heritage in Radcliffe.
- The 'Friends of..' group were taking a back seat on and were focusing their efforts on becoming a 'Park Watch' scheme as the group had had no contact with the Council since and no-one to report to now that the Rangers were no longer available.
- The Councillors were asked to look into the damage being caused to James the Dinosaur structure at the park and the need for signage to try to prevent further damage. Councillor Shori agreed to look investigate this.

David Lewis, Chapelfield Village Association provided the following update:-

- Luncheon Club were holding a trip to Tatton Park on Friday 27th November.
- The Nature Reserve had new signage and were now working on securing the addition of a new bench.
- The village signs had been erected on entering Chapelfield on Stand Lane.

It was agreed:

That the information provided be noted, with thanks.

RTF487 COMMUNITY FUNDING REPORT

A copy of the Community Funding Report for Radcliffe was submitted setting out details of the funding allocations to date in support of the work of local, voluntary and community groups. The Township Co-ordinator provided clarification on the the allocation of funding and the amounts available to the groups.

It was agreed:

That the report be noted.

RTF488 COMMUNITY FUNDING PANEL RESULTS

The Township Forum Funding Panel had considered applications for grants from the Community Fund from the following organisations:-

Red Bank - £250.

Radcliffe Business Group - £250.

Rotary Club - £250.

It was agreed:

That the applications for funding be approved by members of Radcliffe Township Forum.

RTF489 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

That the next meeting of Radcliffe Township Forum would take place on Monday 11 January, 2016 at 6 pm, at Radcliffe Civic Suite.

COUNCILLOR COLIN JONES

Chair

(Note: The meeting started at Time Not Specified and ended at Time Not Specified)